

Feature

President Reflects Mid-way through Term

When Conference President Margaret Walker began her two-year term as president, she knew that it would be a lot of work, but the biggest surprise, she says, is “how much fun I’ve been having”. Though she had served at the Conference level in the past as a member of committees and working groups, the role of president has given her a different perspective. “It has been great getting to know another level of the church.”

Now halfway through her term, Walker reflected on her time in office. “One of the important things to learn is what my role is as president,” she said. “Some things I can do. I’ve had the opportunity to go to congregations for times for celebration or crisis, and I presided at the installation of the Executive of the Conference’s United Church Women” when they met in May. “But there are times when I need to back off so that I don’t confuse my role is at the Conference level with the functioning of the Presbytery.”

Walker has been an active church person all her life beginning at St. Paul’s United in Orillia. She continues to participate fully at Knox United in Agincourt, is a member of Toronto Southeast Presbytery, and has attended General Council meetings.

“I’ve really appreciated having people to work with,” she says, noting with sadness the death of

Contents

The Wider Church..... pp. 2-3, 7
 Congregations..... pp. 4-6
 Calendar p. 8

Past-president Carol Gierak, with whom she developed a close bond. But she also looks forward to working with President-elect Ann Harbridge and acting Executive Secretary Peter Wyatt while Executive Secretary David Allen is on sabbatical in early 2012.



Conference President Margaret Walker.

Photo by Richard C. Choe.

Her greatest pleasure as president so far was the annual meeting held this past May in her original home congregation. “I had such a good time at the annual meeting,” she says. “It was a big high for me; people came together and had a good time.” She says that what will be even more important is the connections that happened. Conference members attended Sparrow Lake on the Sunday morning of the annual meeting, and in small groups pledged to pray for others and to connect again in the coming year.

As she heads into the final year of her term, she notes that a major piece of work will be the review of the restructuring that took place in 2009. Walker had been chair of one of the Commissions that helped implement changes at the Conference and Presbytery levels. “The review is going to be important,” she says, acknowledging that “I will have to learn to step back from it and let things play out as they need to. I need to be prepared to receive what people are going to say.”

“I like to be positive,” concludes Walker. “I like to see how we find ways to work together. It’s beginning”, she says. “For me it’s a matter of learning how to work with relationships.”

Walker’s term as president will conclude at the Conference annual meeting in May, 2012.

Restructuring Review Underway

When the Conference and Presbyteries were restructured in 2009, part of the plan was that a major review of the changes would be undertaken. That review will begin in September, 2011 and will culminate in a report to the Conference's annual meeting in 2012.

At its June meeting, the Conference Executive established a steering group consisting of the president, president-elect and executive secretary representing Conference, and the chairs (or their designates) of the four Presbyteries. This group will provide direction to the review process.

One of the steering group's first tasks was to hire a review consultant. Ian Fraser of Naramata, B.C. will conduct interviews with a wide variety of people at the Conference and Presbytery levels, and will also seek input from congregations and the General Council. An interim report will be presented to the Conference's Executive in February with a final report in May.

Fraser describes himself as "a lifelong member of The United Church of Canada." He has been a staff person in Edmonton Presbytery, was an elected member of the General Council Executive, and later provided leadership in a staff role at the General Council office in the areas of finance, human resources, fundraising, technology and resource production.

In 2010 he provided an external audit of the



Photo courtesy The United Church of Canada.

Ian Fraser will conduct review.

policy governance structure of British Columbia Conference.

The 2009 restructuring reduced the number of Presbyteries from nine to four, eliminated almost all Conference committees, refocused the staff to work primarily in the Presbyteries, introduced a new assessment formula, and halved the size of the Conference Executive.

MILLS & MILLS LLP BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS ESTABLISHED 1884

"...generations of trust..."

Mills & Mills LLP is a trusted adviser to congregations, trustees, church officials and the courts of the church.

For over a century, we have advised on all manner and types of legal issues including real estate, employment, conflict resolution, applications for private legislation, property development, estates, leases, by-law compliance, The Manual of the United Church of Canada, governance, and, generally, all legal matters relating to the life and ministry of Ontario churches.

For information about our services or if you wish to arrange a free consultation about any issue affecting your church, please contact Paul Mills at (416) 682-7110 or Martin Campbell at (416) 682-7111, or email us at: paul.mills@millsandmills.ca or martin.campbell@millsandmills.ca.

We also invite you to visit our website at www.millsandmills.ca and the link to our Church Law Group for more information about our firm and the services which we provide.

MILLS & MILLS LLP • 2 ST. CLAIR AVENUE WEST, SUITE 700 • TORONTO, ON M4V 1L5

Fred Victor More Than You Might Think

When most people think about the Fred Victor Mission, they remember a single location at the corner of Jarvis and Queen Streets in Toronto serving men in a shelter. But have times changed! Fred Victor – now known as the Fred Victor Centre – is a multi-service agency with 10 locations and 180 employees.

Fred Victor's origins go back 125 years to October, 1886 when Mary Sheffield, a widow with a stern demeanour, heard a call to start a Sunday School to save the souls of wayward boys in Toronto. "Only the children didn't come," writes Cary Fagan in *The Fred Victor Mission Story: from charity to social justice*. Fagan describes how Sheffield persisted in her mission, gathering support from Metropolitan Methodist Church, where she was a member, and the Mission grew over the years, taken over by a Home Missionary Society.

"Fred Victor" was actually Fred Victor Massey of the influential Massey family whose name is associated with many business, cultural and philanthropic endeavours. Fred Victor (named because of his birth on Queen Victoria's birthday), was a devout Methodist who volunteered at the growing Mission but, at the age of 22, died of lung haemorrhaging.

In 2011 Fred Victor completed a \$12,000,000 renovation of the property at Jarvis and Queen. Bernie Granka, operations manager, said the renovations have provided improved living conditions for the 96 men and women who live at the site. Three people share a common area, but each has a private bathroom. The renovations also up-graded the fire and life-saving systems.

One of the residents, Jim Shaw, has lived at Fred Victor for 10 years. Originally from Nova Scotia, Shaw had to move a number of times during the construction, but he says his new apartment is "great; it's much bigger, and there's more privacy." Shaw appreciates sharing the apartment with "a couple of good guys", and enjoys participating in the many programs and events offered.

Communications Manager Carol Watson and Jane Truemner, Director of Communications and Fundraising, speak enthusiastically about the changes at this location. There is improved space for health care services, consultations, drop-in facilities, a



Photo by Michael Joseph.

Friends, staff and community members gather at the Fred Victor Centre annual meeting.

catering company and restaurant, expanded mental health, showers, a laundry and a clothing room.

The United Church's involvement goes back to Fred Victor's origins and continues to this day, says Truemner. Fairlawn Avenue United gave \$175,000 to help develop housing, and Eglinton St. George's United provided \$100,000 for upgrades of the commercial kitchen. "We have received lots of support from other congregations and the United Church Women," says Watson. Tours of the facility can be arranged.

These days, Fred Victor provides affordable housing for men, women and families. 14 women with disabilities live in one location. There are day programs and a hostel for 40 women. Employment and training services are offered to nearly 4,000 people.

Though the United Church's involvement is less than it was, the ties are still strong, says Watson. "Without the vision, the longing for social justice and the practical support and know-how of the United Church, Fred Victor today would not exist." A number of Fred Victor Board members are United Church members. Says Watson, "Staff and Board at Fred Victor have a great deal of respect for the values and spirit that carried this organization for so many years and continues to carry it."

Read more about Fred Victor at www.fredvictor.org or contact Carol Watson at cwatson@fredvictor.org or Jane Truemner at jtruemner@fredvictor.org.

Photographer Combines his Art and Spirituality

Richard Chung-Sik Choe is well known as an avid photographer whose pictures have often appeared in *Insight*. His skills have taken him to many places around the world where a keen eye for the spiritual keeps him engaged in making connections with ordinary things and the sacred.

Ordained by Toronto Conference in 1990, Choe currently ministers at Kingston Road United Church in Toronto. Growing up in South Korea, Choe watched his father taking pictures and looked at the photos his father brought back from his trips away as a lieutenant-colonel in the South Korean army.

But it was when his daughter Frances was born that Choe asked himself, “What kind of lasting gift can I give?” He got more serious about photography while attending Emmanuel College, taking pictures of events and for the year book. While he was serving as General Secretary of the General Council’s Ethnic Ministries Council, new doors opened. He took some pictures of aboriginal and ethnic women. “I wanted to capture beautiful images of people who are often invisible,” he says. “I was trying to make connections between the beauty within the person. How do I convey who they really are?”

Choe’s quest to find beauty and express it

through photography can be seen currently in his daily photo blog found at <http://wondergaze.blogspot.com>. (See an example on this page.) Each day, he uploads a picture and combines it with a quote. The exercise is important for his ministry, he says. “It’s part of my sermon preparation; it’s a time of meditation and is thought-provoking” and, he adds, “the images promote inclusivity; the quotes are not just from straight white guys.”

“A lot of the pictures are local – gardens in the neighbourhood, people on the street,” says Choe. “They help people to make connections with the words they hear in worship and in the hymns.”

Choe’s photography is an integrated part of his ministry. “This is a way of reaching out to folks outside the Sunday worship celebrations and to connect with folks who are interested in ‘spirituality’ without ‘organized’ religion.”

“Too often we have a poverty of imagination,” he says. “You can discover sacredness and beauty any place you look.”

Editor’s note: If you take photographs that help to express the sacred, please send a sample to Insight at dallen@united-church.ca.



To See

Nobody sees a flower, really – it’s so small – we haven’t time, and to see takes time. ...

Georgia O’Keeffe

Who Should I train? In what? Specifics for Congregational Ministries

This is the fifth article designed to assist congregations with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Previous articles described what must be included in the customer service policies. This article focuses on training that is required.

As your congregation creates its customer service policy, you will discover the need to provide training. The government has outlined specific training points. *What* you must do is specified. *How* you do it has some flexibility. You could host a training workshop. You can add training components to your regular board meetings or create a worship service designed to address the training components. You can use an online module or create a workbook for individuals to complete individually.

Training must be completed by all staff and volunteers who interact with the public, and all those involved in policy making in your governing structure. Typically, this will mean your Board, Council or Session. Key volunteer areas will include your staff, greeters and ushers, Sunday School teachers, study group facilitators, and program leaders.

This list summarizes the training requirements under the customer service standard:

- o Review of the purposes of the AODA, 2005
- o Review of the requirements of the customer service standard
- o Instruction on how to interact and communicate with people who have various types of disabilities
- o Instruction on how to interact with people with various types of disabilities who use assistive devices
- o Instruction on how to use equipment or assistive devices available on your premises, or that you otherwise provide, that

may help you in the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities

- o Instruction about how to interact with people with disabilities who have a guide dog or other service animal
- o Instruction on how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person when you are providing service to them
- o Instruction on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your goods or services
- o Training on your policies, practices and procedures relating to the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities.

These requirements may need to be supplemented with details specific to your congregation. You will also need to provide training on your feedback documents. You can find worksheets for all these in the following training resource – unit 3 found at:

<http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/documents/en/mcsc/accessibility/ComplyingStandards/trainres/TrainingResource.pdf>.

It is important to remember that training will need to be ongoing. As new volunteers offer their gifts, new policies are developed by your governing structure, and new assistive technology becomes available to your congregation, the need for training emerges. When you receive your pastoral oversight visit from your Presbytery, they will ask you to show

them your Accessibility Policy and Training Log.

All four Presbyteries are currently offering workshops to assist you in writing your policy and providing tools to assist you in your training. Check with your Presbytery administrative staff for more information.

Your policy and your training must be complete before January 1, 2012!



Accessibility Fund Established

The Executive of Toronto Conference has established an accessibility fund to assist congregations and other ministries to become compliant with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Throughout 2011, *Insight* has been running articles designed to help congregations to become compliant with this Ontario government requirement.

Customer service policies and training must be in place by January 1, 2012. However, the long-term requirements of the bill will make all public venues accessible. This includes churches. Dollar-for-dollar matching grants of up to \$1,000 will help ministries to do smaller items such as providing signage, hearing devices, etc. Larger projects will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$5,000.

Money for this fund comes from under-spending of the Conference's budget in 2009 and 2010 plus unspent money from the communication technology fund, which will close September 30.

The accessibility fund becomes active October 1 and will remain open until the funds are exhausted. Find information at www.torontoconference.ca. Click on "Resources" and then go to "Funding and Grants".

Anti-violence and harassment legislation – Bill 168

Employers in Ontario must meet the requirements of Bill 168, Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act: Violence and Harassment in the Workplace. Congregations are employers too. As of June 15, 2010 – more than a year ago – each employing body was to have in place policies that would outline its stance on violence and harassment in the workplace along with measures to deal with incidents, should they occur.

Toronto Conference has developed resource material that will be available to all congregations beginning in September. Training will be provided to several people from each Presbytery, who will then assist congregations to work through the required material.

50 Years of Grace

By *Deborah Hardwick*

"Celebrating the past – Embracing the future with Grace", is the slogan chosen by Grace United Church in Barrie to guide us in our recognition of our 50th anniversary as a congregation. We have been celebrating with a variety of events and activities throughout the year. Each Sunday a member provides a "memories moment" to share something that was important for them, such as a child's baptism or a favourite sermon. One member told us that he originally thought he was at the Presbyterian Church 10 years ago, but decided to stay. One Sunday we created and dedicated a new Children's Garden which a neighbour mistook as a burial plot. By-law enforcement officers arrived to see lovely flowers planted instead of a body! We have raised funds through a memorial hymn sing, a 50 minute walk, ride, or roll-a-thon, the creation and sale of 2011 calendars and 50th anniversary pins.

We are looking forward to more events and activities this fall, including guest speakers, a tree planting and the highlight is the fiftieth anniversary weekend, October 8th and 9th. We welcome everyone to share in our celebrations with a catered roast beef dinner with all the trimmings on Saturday, October 8th. Rev. Arthur Storey, who was the minister at Grace for 37 of the 50 years, will be returning to the pulpit on Sunday, October 9th for a meaningful anniversary worship service. A memorial stained glass window will be dedicated as an anniversary tribute and presentations will be made to our seven surviving charter members. A lunch will follow with plenty of time to catch up with friends and acquaintances.

Tickets for the roast beef dinner are available at Grace United Church, or by calling the church office at 705-734-0760. Billets can be arranged for those of you from out-of-town who wish to stay the weekend.

For more information, please see our website: www.graceuc.on.ca.

A. BETH MOORE, B.A., LL.B.
BARRISTER, SOLICITOR AND NOTARY PUBLIC

Legal services for individuals, churches, businesses & corporations

Corporate/Commercial, Real Estate, Wills and Estates

2600 Danforth Ave. (at Main St.)

Toronto, Ontario, M4C 1L3

Email: bmoore@abmoorelaw.com

TEL: 416 699-9829

FAX: 416 699-8905

www.abmoorelaw.com

Acting executive secretary appointed



Photo by Richard C. Choe.

Rev. Dr. Peter Wyatt (pictured) has been appointed acting executive secretary of Toronto Conference January 1-April 30, 2012 while Executive Secretary David Allen is on sabbatical and holidays. Wyatt, who spoke as a retiree at the 2011 Conference annual meeting, will be working out of the Conference office approximately half-time, providing support to the Conference's president, Executive, committees, task groups, and staff.

At press time, Allen's sabbatical plans are still emerging, but the two main components are time

spent with congregations with a focus on worship in a multi-media age; and cultivation and development of future leaders who inspire and enable change.

General Council Invites Feedback

By Judy Sullivan, General Council staff

In 2009, General Council 40 passed a motion directing the General Secretary, General Council, to host a national consultation within the next three years, with gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and two-spirited members of the United Church to discuss homophobia and heterosexism in the church, and to meet and discuss following the consultation, with Affirm United representatives and national staff representatives, the time line and responsibility for any and all recommendations that come from the consultation.

Over the past year representatives from across the country, including Affirm United and the General Council Office, have been planning and preparing for a series of consultations to be held across the country.

Participants may be GLBTT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, or two spirited) persons associated with the United Church, or GLBTT allies; they will share their stories and respond to four main questions:

1. In the context of the United Church of Canada, what does "welcoming" mean?
2. Who might be missing in the church because of transphobia, homophobia, heterosexism, or other forms of oppression that impact welcoming in your community?
3. What in your church ministry would you need to authentically be your full self?
4. What role would you like others to play in supporting the ongoing transformation of the United Church of Canada?

Regional facilitators are looking forward to meeting with GLBTT folks in their regions. The Toronto event will be held September 17 at St. Andrew's United Church, Toronto.

Contact Ryan Tristin Chapman at ryanmileschapman@gmail.com or Warren McDougall at warren@rhuc.org.

Royal Canadian College of Organists presents

Organ Skills Workshops

September 17, 2011 and November 19, 2011



The Toronto Centre of the RCCO is presenting two full day workshops for organ skills development. These are FREE "boot camp" style sessions for new and not-so-new music people charged by their pastors and church organizations to provide organ hymn accompaniment, service music, preludes, interludes and postludes. Hands-on instruction, playing techniques, registration (the sounds and colours of the organ), finding appropriate music for every occasion, working with soloists and choirs, employment issues, rehearsal tips, and much more will be presented by skilled and experienced professional organists with teaching experience. Participants are encouraged to bring lots of questions, and an optional hymn or short voluntary to play or to use as an example.

The locations for each workshop are:

September 17, 2011:	November 19, 2011:
10:00 – 3:00	10:00 – 3:00
Richmond Hill United Church 10201 Yonge Street Richmond Hill, ON L4C 3B2 (905) 884-1301 Pipe Organ: Two-manual, 15-stop Casavant Frères, Opus 990	St. Clement's Anglican Church 59 Briar Hill Ave Toronto, ON M4R 1H8 (416) 483-6664 Pipe Organ: Three-manual, 46-stop Casavant Frères, Opus 1289

The second session will build upon ideas presented at the first, so please plan to attend both sessions if possible.

To register for these FREE workshops, please visit our website www.rccotoronto.ca or contact Lydia Pedersen either by phone 416-236-5085 or email at lydia.pedersen@sympatico.ca

Calendar

September 21/22 – Sexual abuse policy workshops Ministry Personnel who have not yet participated in the mandatory sexual abuse policy workshops can register at <http://www.torontoconference.ca>; click on “Conference News” and scroll to the workshops in the left-hand column.

September 23-25 - ALGOMA ‘FRIENDS’ DO IT AGAIN! The Welcome Friend Association Inc. is hosting their second Focus on the Gay Family Conference ‘There are no dumb questions’ on Sept. 23-25 in Sault Ste. Marie. The conference is open to all of the GLBT2SQ community, their family and friends. The theme will provide opportunity for discussion, education, advocacy, workshops, panels and socializing in a safe and welcoming environment. The event location is Algoma’s Water Tower Inn & Suites in the Soo, Ontario. Registration is \$15 for students or \$45 for adults for the full event; attendance at the individual speaker presentations only is \$15 each. Contact Harry at 705-842-2020 or email info@welcomefriend.ca.

October 16: Running for Refugees As part of the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon, members and friends of Islington United Church Refugee Support Ministry will participate in a 5 km walk/run. Sponsorships for the team, Running for Refugees, are welcome. One hundred percent of all donations will go directly to support church-sponsored refugee families. See www.torontowaterfrontmarathon.com; click on Charity Challenge and scroll to Islington United Church to sponsor this work.

October 28 - “An Evening of Jazz at Bloordale” At 8:00 p.m. Bloordale United Church, 4258 Bloor St. W., Etobicoke, featuring Mike Daley on guitar, vocal, jazz memorabilia; Ross Woolbridge on clarinet, saxophone; Brigham Phillips on piano, trumpet; Nick Frazer on drums; Jay Burr on bass, trombone. Doors open 7:15 p.m., come early for best seats. Refreshments available. Tickets \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door. For tickets or information please call Nancy 416-620-5377, Barbara 416-621-1047 or Vanessa 416-358-4504.

October 29 - Sabbatical Planning Workshop At Thornhill United Church, 25 Elgin Street, Thornhill. Are you a minister in Toronto Conference who is eligible to take a sabbatical soon? Are you an M&P chair or a chairperson of an Official Board or Council who would

like to support a sabbatical for your minister but wonder how the Pastoral Charge can afford it? Are you wondering: Just what is a sabbatical? Ministers, M&P chairpersons and Council/Official Board chairpersons are invited to come together for a Sabbatical Planning Workshop. There will be information sharing, a panel discussion with ministers and lay leadership who have experienced a sabbatical, plus a question and answer period. Cost: \$20 per person or \$40.00 per team of 3 persons: Minister, M&P chair and Council chair. Snacks and lunch included. Contact Louise Hewson at 1-800-446-4729, ext 240, or email lhewson@united-church.ca.

Continuing Education Opportunity

Have you ever wondered what it’s like to be in a Conference/Presbytery staff position? Have you ever thought about applying to be an administrative person, a program person or an executive secretary? What’s it like to plan an event? What kind of phone calls come in? How do you keep track of all the information that arrives on your desk?

As one initiative toward developing future leaders, Conference staff is offering the opportunity for individuals to join current staff members to see what their work involves. (Proper safeguards will be in place to ensure that no confidential material is divulged.)

If you would like to “shadow” a staff position (or more than one position) for a week, be in touch with Executive Secretary David Allen at dallen@united-church.ca. Give some thought to which position (or positions) might interest you.

Insight

Volume 39, No. 5

Publisher: Toronto Conference

Editor: David Allen, Executive Secretary

Layout and Design: Carol J. Anderson

Insight is copyrighted by Toronto Conference. For permission to reprint articles, contact the editor.

Send submissions to dallen@united-church.ca

Insight will next appear in November. Deadline for the September issue is September 25.

Conference website: www.torontoconference.ca